

## Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Working Group

Submitted at 7-20-16 meeting  
Recommendations 1 – 4

### AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION

**1. An Oversight Commission Should Have the Authority to Streamline Information, Recommendations, and Requests to Probation**

The Probation Oversight Commission must be independent of the Probation Department, but have the designated authority over the department to force compliance and accountability.

There is a significant need to develop a policy and procedure that streamlines the process by which any oversight body or staff submit a request for information or inquiry from the Probation Department.

This will avoid duplication and the unnecessary expenditure of Probation time and resources spent responding to multiple agencies, generating reports, and repetitive questions. There should be a mechanism by which a single oversight body has the authority to compile inquiries and requests for information; receive information and reports from all citizen oversight or advocacy groups; evaluate information; and, synthesize duplicative requests and/or repetitive concerns.

This Oversight Commission should be the sole oversight entity to which Probation must respond with requests for information. Such streamlining might also save County resources. (Note: it is important that the Board of Supervisors buys into the value of and this responsibility of the Commission, so that individual offices do not interject and impose their own time-consuming requests on Probation.)

These requests should be completed electronically in a data base for tracking, response and actions. The data base could be available for viewing to those that have a need for such access, such as selected members of the Probation Department, CEO Office, and Board of Supervisor's Office

**2. An Oversight Commission Needs "Teeth" and an enforcement mechanism** The Oversight Commission must have sufficient authority or "teeth" to force compliance and accountability. ~~perhaps~~ Such authority could include the ability to require a response from the Chief Probation Officer or designee on an action, report or corrective measure within a reasonable time period, such as 30 days. Failure to comply, would result in a formal request to the Board of Supervisor's for appropriate sanctions or action.

Another mechanism for enforcement could be the authority would be the ability to weigh in on or approve the Probation Department's budget requests prior to approval by the Board of Supervisors. The Probation Oversight Commission must have a meaningful enforcement mechanism to hold the Probation Department accountable. The Commission also needs the ability to respond in a timely fashion (or generate a timely response from the appropriate party) to concerns and issues raised. This will require a budget and appropriate staff.

Several existing oversight bodies currently face constraints that prohibit the ability a timely response (e.g., being limited to the "power of the pen" or the ability to generate an annual report as a response).

**3. Capacity for Budget Oversight**

**Financial issues and questions present ongoing concerns. The Oversight Commission should have some oversight and ability to weigh in on budget issues.** Probation's budget proposals should come to the Oversight Committee for **approval before going to the Board of Supervisors.**

**4. The Oversight Commission Must Have Access to Complete Files to Conduct Its Oversight Work.**

A single person's report does not paint the entire picture. Commissioners and **teams conducting oversight must be able to assess issues that involve multiple agencies (e.g., probation, education, mental health, etc.), and gather information to collect data and look for trends.**

There is a compelling and identified need for the Probation Oversight Commission to work collaboratively with other oversight bodies who inspect and prepare reports on issues related to the Probation Department, Camps, Halls or programs. These include but are not limited to the Grand Jury, Sybil Brand Commission, Office of Independent Monitoring, Los Angeles County Fire Department (Inspectors), Health Department (Inspectors), Los Angeles County Office of Education, Mental Health, Commission on Children and Family Services and the California Board of State and Community Corrections, (BSCC)